



Newsletter No. 14, December 2007

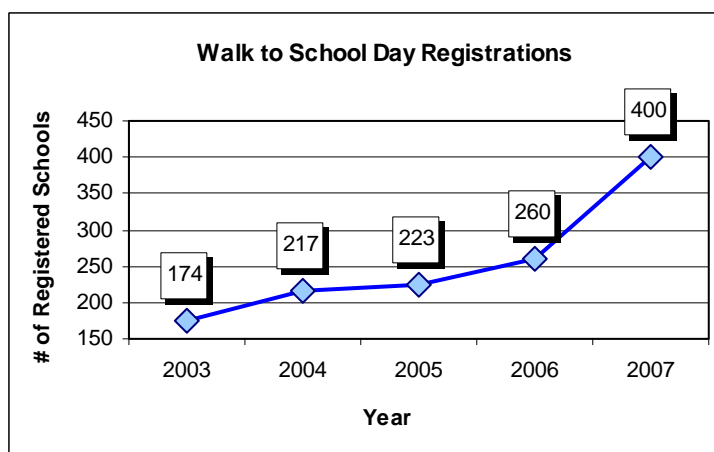
Hello Safe Routes to School coordinators and friends! Here is what's new with Michigan's Safe Routes to School program this month:

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY WRAP-UP

Walk to School Day 2007 was a big success! A total of 400 schools in 58 counties participated in a Walk to School Day event in Michigan this fall, our largest total ever.

Schools participated in a number of ways, including:

- *Organizing remote drops and pick-ups.* Students that normally arrived by car or bus were dropped a short distance from school at a central location and walked to school together, or the students walked together to a designated pick-up location after school. Some of the locations schools used as drop-off/pick-up sites included football stadiums, local businesses, churches, city landmarks, even a city hall!
- *Holding assemblies* to discuss the importance of daily physical activity and pedestrian safety. Guests included parents, staff, elected officials, high school and college athletes, and marching bands.
- Holding *Walk to School Day-at School* activities that included walking inside the gymnasium or on the playground as a way of involving those students who arrived by bus or car.
- Having students meet at designated pick-up locations throughout neighborhoods as part of a *Walking School Bus* program.
- Many schools used incentives to encourage walking and biking, including raffles and prizes, healthy snacks and drinks, and acknowledging participants in newsletters and during school announcements.



If your school held a Walk to School Day event but did not fill out a post-event response form, please take a moment to do so and let us know how your day went. The form is available on www.saferoutesmichigan.org or by calling 1-800-434-8642.

Also, it's not too early to sign-up for Walk to School Day 2008, traditionally held the first Wednesday in October. Walk to School Day can be held anytime in October, however, so choose whichever date works best for your school. You can register your school online by visiting the Walk to School Day section of www.saferoutesmichigan.org. **Remember, schools that have registered for the Safe Routes to School program are automatically registered for Walk to School Day.**

Finally, a big thank you to all of the staff, student, parent and community volunteers and participants who make Walk to School Day possible!



MDOT WINS NATIONAL AWARD FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM



The National Center for Safe Routes to School awarded the 2007 James L. Oberstar Award to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for the establishment of the exemplary Michigan Safe Routes to School Program. The award is named after Congressman James L. Oberstar (D-MN) to honor his dedication to America's school children as the pioneer for the National Safe Routes to School Program. Oberstar, current chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, sponsored the federal Safe Routes to School legislation that strives to create safe settings where more parents and children can walk and bicycle to school.

The Michigan SRTS Program was recognized because it demonstrates a number of key program elements that allow Michigan schools to lay the groundwork for effective program development. Along with partner organizations and various subcontractors, MDOT is also creating a number of specialized program materials and procedures for children in urban areas and children with disabilities, who may face special challenges surrounding walking and bicycling to school. Recognizing the need for program support, the Michigan Fitness Foundation and MDOT have also established training and technical assistance programs for schools completing the planning process.

Currently, 60 percent of Michigan's counties have a total of 275+ registered schools that are in various stages of completing the planning process. Registered schools become the pool of applicants for State funds and their actions plans are the basis for projects for which they request funding. MDOT maintains an open call for applications with no deadline for submittal, allowing each school to proceed at its own pace. According to Congressman Oberstar, "Michigan is setting the pace, and I look forward to seeing this program take root, grow and thrive throughout the country."

For more information on the James L. Oberstar Award, please visit:
http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/news_room/oberstar_award/

1st SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Michigan hosted the 1st Safe Routes to School National Conference at the Dearborn Inn in November. Over 400 people attended the conference from 47 states, including 150+ people from Michigan alone. There will soon be a website dedicated to the national conference that highlights presentations from the breakout sessions, plenary speakers and pictures. Stay tuned!

EVALUATION IN 2007

- Over 30 schools contacted MSU for information on evaluation services
- MSU is entering and analyzing data for about a dozen schools
- Ten schools will have received their results by the end of December 2007
- MSU will begin reporting evaluation data to the National Safe Routes Clearinghouse so progress can be highlighted in national reporting
- All evaluation tools are available on www.saferoutesmichigan.org/surveys.htm or you can contact Dr. Vogt at vogtc@msu.edu
- PLEASE BE SURE to complete principal and teacher consent forms prior to distributing surveys. Data will not be analyzed by the MSU evaluation team UNLESS consent forms have been signed.

Thanks, and please remember to call our office if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions!

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Andrea Cawthray <acawthray@michiganfitness.org>
Rosie Stern <rstern@michiganfitness.org>

Lee Kokinakis <ckokinakis@michiganfitness.org>
Alex Nikoloff <anikoloff@michiganfitness.org>